



Allen family papers 1978

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on December 20, 2020.
Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Manuscripts and Archives

PO Box 3630

Wilmington, Delaware 19807

askhagley@hagley.org

URL: <http://www.hagley.org/library>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical Note	3
Scope and Content	4
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	5
Controlled Access Headings	6

Summary Information

Repository:	Manuscripts and Archives
Creator:	Allen family
Title:	Allen family papers
ID:	1978
Date [inclusive]:	1818-1925
Physical Description:	1 Linear Foot
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Horatio Allen (1802-1889) was a noted civil engineer and inventor, who worked with the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company, the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company, the Croton Aqueduct, and the New York & Erie Railroad. The bulk of his the papers is personal correspondence (1818-1864), and biographical materials collected by his family. Also included is a small collection of Allen's business papers, particularly concerning his work on the New York & Erie Railroad.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical Note

Horatio Allen (1802-1889) was a noted civil engineer and inventor, who worked with the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company, the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company, the Croton Aqueduct, and the New York & Erie Railroad. Allen was born in Schenectady, New York, on May 10, 1802. His father, Dr. Benjamin Allen, was then professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Union College.

Horatio Allen graduated from Columbia College in 1823 with high honors in mathematics. Deciding upon a career in engineering, he spent a year on the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal. Around 1825 he joined the staff of the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company as a resident engineer. When the company decided to import locomotives for use on its connecting railroad, Allen was sent to England in 1828 to procure them. Four locomotives were contracted for, the first in the United States. One, the STOURBRIDGE LION, was tested at Honesdale, Pennsylvania, on August 9, 1829, and Allen had the distinction of being the first man to operate a locomotive in the western hemisphere. However, the locomotives proved to be too heavy for the track structure and were not used in revenue service.

Upon completion of the Delaware & Hudson, Allen accepted the position of chief engineer of the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company, which was planning to build from Charleston to a point opposite Augusta, Georgia. Allen pushed to have the company adopt locomotive power, and under his direction the West Point Foundry in New York City built the BEST FRIEND OF CHARLESTON, the first locomotive produced for sale in America.

Allen remained in Charleston until 1835, after which he and his new bride, Mary M. Simons, travelled abroad for three years. On their return, they settled in New York City, where Allen was named principal assistant engineer of the Croton Aqueduct. He was also serving as a consulting engineer to the New York & Erie Railroad. In 1842 he became one of the proprietors of the Novelty Iron Works, a noted builder of marine engines. Allen retired from active business in 1870, but continued with consulting work. In his later years he devoted much time to education, particularly the teaching of astronomy, for which he wrote a textbook and constructed several instruments. He died on December 31, 1889 at South Orange, New Jersey.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content

The Horatio Allen papers were handed down in the family of his sister, Mary Louisa Allen, and her husband, Edmund C. Evans. Associated with them are genealogical materials and the papers of other Allen family members.

The bulk of the papers are represented by Allen's personal correspondence (1818-1864), and biographical materials collected by his family. There is also a small collection of Allen's business papers, particularly concerning his work on the New York & Erie Railroad. There is also a long letter written to J. Elfreth Watkins of the Smithsonian in 1888 giving his views on the early history of the locomotive, along with a list of his patents. The outgoing family letters frequently discuss Allen's business activities along with domestic matters, and there is ample evidence of his intellectual training and beliefs. Allen's letters to his father cover his period of studies at Columbia. His letters occasionally include observations on political events such as the Nullification Crisis. The papers include copies of three of Allen's published works: *Sun, Planet and Star Instrument* (1883), *The Railroad Era: First Five Years of Its Development* (1884), and *Arithmetic* (1884).

Another important item is a 342-page notebook prepared by Horatio Allen's son. It provides an extended biography of Allen down to 1833, combining reminiscence with transcriptions of letters (some still in the collection, others lost) and of Allen's journal now at the Baker Library.

Miscellany comprise printed articles relating to the history of the *Stourbridge Lion* and the D&H Railroad and of the locomotive named for Horatio Allen by the D&H in 1924. There are also two poems on a famous marine disaster, the 1854 wreck of the Collins Line steamer *Arctic*, whose engines were built by Allen's Novelty Iron Works. Horatio's brother, George F. Allen, survived the sinking of the *Arctic*, but George's wife, infant son and several in-laws perished.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Series I. Allen/Benedict family genealogies; Series II. Allen Family Association material; Series III. Thomas Allen papers; Series IV. Benjamin Allen papers; Series V. Horatio Allen papers; Series VI. Delaware & Hudson Company memorabilia; Series VII. Mary M. Allen papers; Series VIII. Mary L. Evans papers; Series IX. Theodore Allen papers; Series X. George F. Allen papers; Series XI. Miscellaneous.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Manuscripts and Archives

PO Box 3630

Wilmington, Delaware 19807

askhagley@hagley.org

URL: <http://www.hagley.org/library>

Access Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Material

Horatio Allen's 1828 journal is located at the Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Soldiers Field, Boston, MA 02163.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Railroads.
- Steam locomotives
- Civil engineers
- Genealogies
- Social history
- Correspondence.
- Biography
- Allen, Horatio, 1802-1889
- Allen, Grace B. (Grace Brown), 1849-1854
- Allen, George F. (George Featherstonhaugh), 1815-1863
- Allen, Benjamin, 1772-1836
- Allen, Rose E.
- Allen, Mary Mancrief, 1811-1887
- Allen, Mary L. (Mary Louisa), 1816-1861
- Allen, Mary Benedict (Mary Benedict), 1778-1828
- Benedict family
- Arctic (Steamship)
- Allen, Thomas, 1698-1780
- Allen, Theodore, 1800-1850
- Loree, Leonor Fresnel
- Delaware and Hudson Company
- Delaware and Hudson Canal Company
- Brown, James, 1791-1877
- Panama Railroad Co
- Serrell, Edward W. (Edward Wellman)
- New York and Erie Railroad Company
- Watkins, J. Elfreth (John Elfreth), 1852-1903
- Seymour, Silas, 1817-1890
- South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company
- Albany Academy
- Allen Family Association
- New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor
- West Point Foundry Association